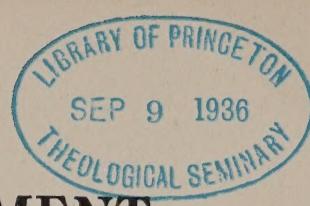


CREATIVE MANAGEMENT



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The Relation of Aims to
Administration

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PREFACE

This pamphlet is the outgrowth of a long and increasingly intimate contact with executives in both national and local groups in the Y. M. C. A., the Y. W. C. A., the hospital management and district nursing fields, and with those interested in the administration of various other social agencies during the years when I was on the faculty of the New York School for Social Work.

I have thus been afforded a valuable opportunity to consider the possible applications of the principles and methods of administration and management as these have been developing in other fields, to the administrative problems of social agencies and institutions.

This study makes no pretense at being a complete statement of administrative theory and practice as related to institutional needs. Its aim is the more modest one of considering a certain related group of problems which major executives are finding especially urgent and puzzling in their present day-to-day work, as they strive for the better coördination of the activities of governing boards, the professional staff, the operating employees, the volunteers, the membership or clientele, and the local community. While the study is thus addressed in the first instance to head executives and others associated with the determination of policy, I have tried always to see the issues which arise as they bear upon the satisfactions and benefits to the entire group—both those at work and the constituency.

I assume sole responsibility for the conclusions and applications here tentatively suggested. But it can be said with some confidence that both the general and the particular way of approaching organization problems here offered are by no means novel or untried. And the problems faced are in my personal

experience widely recognized as common and pressing in organizations of all kinds, irrespective of their objectives.

It is my hope that this statement can help to forward the thinking of leaders in institutional organizations as to the organic relation which exists between each institution's objectives and operating methods which will best give them effect.

Management in the future will be creative as it builds its structure in such ways as to assure that its aims are being realized not in some vague, general way, but in the every-day conduct of the staff in its relations with the members or the clientele.

ORDWAY TEAD.

New York

October 15, 1935

INTRODUCTION

When new organizations first get under way there is a natural enthusiasm about their mission which carries them a long way forward with splendid vigor. They make progress in spite of all obstacles; and difficulties that later might become all but fatal to effective service are valiantly overridden.

But all this becomes decreasingly true as organizations increase in size, in age, and in prestige. Hardening of the arteries is a danger of the middle years which can only be withstood as organization leaders give special thought to the problems which age brings. Over-centralized authority, confused responsibilities, a sense of vested rights in jobs, lessened clarity and earnestness about the central aim, the burden of a heavy overhead, the utilization of elaborate plant equipment, the dwindling interest of financial supporters—all these and many other complexities grow up to bedevil the executives of organizations and to create genuine problems of policy, structure, and method which no amount of sheer good will and moral fervor can of themselves solve.

It is, of course, not at all a matter for individual blame that affairs take this course. It might almost be characterized as a diagnosis of the natural history of human organizations. But the time does nevertheless come when those responsible for the management of associations and institutions have a sense that the whole organism needs to be examined with fresh eyes with a view to prescribing for a combination of ills which together call for treatment effective enough to cure the patient.

That is the excuse for this diagnosis of social, philanthropic, and community agencies, which after a severe depression feel that they face problems of internal operation and of relations with the community which in their totality are new in degree if not in kind.

My central theme is that in organizations with aims which get their effect in the minds and hearts of individual members and in their consequent more enlightened and socially effective conduct in the community, *the way the association or institution is set up, controlled, and administered influences directly the possibility of successfully realizing the aims.* Organization structure is a limiting factor upon organized operation. To profess aims of personality growth, of spiritual enrichment, of mental enlargement, and then to carry on with an administrative machinery which is essentially controlled in all essential factors of policy and program from a small, self-perpetuating group at the top, is not merely a confusion of means and ends. It is a basic contradiction in terms which tends to weaken the whole activity of the society.

I shall try to show why this is so and what can be done about it, both in terms of structure and methods of group participation in policy-making. And I shall try to show that this new way of looking at the task of administration as improved by exercising collective responsibility carries with it a new way of looking at the rôle of the general executive head—in his relations with his board, with his entire staff, with his committee operations, and with his program formulation and community relations.

The intention is not to offer a manual for the guidance of head administrations so much as it is to present a view of administration as a whole which will help every group in an organization better to understand its rôle and better to integrate its outlook and efforts with those of every one else.

I believe also that in our own day, with its economic stresses and differences of opinion and outlook about issues of social readjustment it is relevant to my main theme to offer, finally, a few suggestions to all the staff members of these organizations as to their individual, personal responsibilities and relations to the community, as these are affected by this new way of looking at organized aims and administrative machinery.

DEFINING THE ORGANIZED AIMS

I have said that aims should dictate something as to the kind of administrative control and machinery which is used. Why is this so? The answer lies in part in a careful examination of the nature of the aims of the kinds of organization here being considered. I am thinking of associations and institutions organized for religious, civic, "social work," educational, character-building purposes—agencies which by various programs are trying to help people to know, to be, and to do *better* whatever will advance their health, happiness, and righteousness in the inevitable community setting of all efforts toward these aspirations.

Such organizations aim at a change in the mind and heart of people, a finer and deeper grasp of life's best values, and a mobilization of energy and passion to help people realize these values. They seek a quickening of intelligence, insight, and emotion which will yield more effective good will among men, a finer and more loyal morale in coöperative efforts to support and create fraternal regard in the world. They seek to point individuals to a way of life for themselves which is at once on a firm foundation of rational reflection, faith, and hope and which flowers largely in the kind of dealings and relations they have with their fellow men. They are striving, if the phrase is broadly conceived, to help to realize *a rule of good* in the lives of men and women. The ancient injunction to seek first the Kingdom of God has been one of the not unfamiliar idioms in which large sections of society have for generations epitomized the institutional aims I am here recalling to mind only in order to consider their bearing upon acceptable kinds of administrative machinery.

Where organizations, for example, seek the realizing of "Christian fellowship," this certainly implies that their own

internal affairs should be ordered and operated so that *the process of operation would always and at all points tangibly express fellowship*. A loving attitude toward one's fellow men; the effort to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly; the intent to act toward others as we would have them act toward us; the active loving of our neighbors as we love ourselves—these are not accidental achievements or by-products of institutional operation. These are, or should be, of the very warp and woof of the hour-by-hour human relations in associations, both among the groups internally related and in the contact of all with the outside world. Obviously, it would seem, they imply something about the kind of organization structure which is set up to advance these aims, about its controls and managerial methods. Indeed, the very idea of "efficiency" as applied to groups with mental or spiritual aims has to be thoroughly re-examined in relation to those aims. This is said not to cast suspicion on "business-like" methods, on budgets or on operating economies. Rather, it is intended to emphasize that we should measure the workings of associated bodies by the basic aim for which the association exists.

The fact is, of course, that the democratic ideal as signifying an assurance of the equal claims of all men to human rights as sons of God was religiously inspired. Democratic methods and forms were also first experimented with under religious auspices, as a logical institutional expression of the religious affirmation of the worth of human personality. And those experiments in democratic method are still going on in various kinds of organizations, even though many problems remain to be solved.

But one thing seems clear: in organizations where the major concern centers about the development of personality (and all related aims) it is essential that *the democratic idea of organization control be acknowledged* and that honest sustained effort be made to apply it in administering the group's affairs.

Indeed, the use of ingenuity and educational astuteness in making this application is one of the most fascinating constructive challenges which is presented to modern administrators.

Here we are on the frontier of new territory in managerial thinking. And if it be objected that such application is impossible, I can only reply that *we have not yet tried out the idea* in any consistent and intelligent way except in a few scattered instances. In fact, the reason why the very ideas of "organization," of "administration," and of "management" are today receiving fresh examination is because of a wide recognition that thus far we have not thought profoundly enough about them to get results which have proved satisfactory in practice.

It is in the light of these profound aims that we have to look at the realities of organized relations as we find them today. With no desire to exaggerate the picture, I would nevertheless urge that an examination of present conditions gives rise to misgivings. Typically in the institutions we are here concerned with, there is a board of trustees or directors chosen for various reasons from the "responsible" groups in the community. Some are selected because of their own financial strength or their connection with possible donors; some are chosen for reasons of prestige; some are competent in matters of budget and building operation; and some are representatives of responsible groups of members. We are likely to find local bankers, merchants, chamber of commerce executives, or the wives of these influential members of the community, in positions of power on boards.

And because this is so, the relation of the board to professional staff workers and to all the lesser employees tends all too often to be one essentially of the same master-and-servant character which prevails in business organizations. And the relation of the board to the members or clientele may tend to be tinged with that subtle patronizing quality which is all too likely to arise when one group is trying to "do good to" some other group in the community.

All of this is so usual and so customary that it has tended until recently to be taken for granted by all concerned. Today, however, we do find some questionings about the way in which

boards are chosen and the relation to them of the staff and the members. There are instances of "rank-and-file" protest groups, "youth movements" within organizations, efforts to broaden the basis of representation on the controlling body of the association.

There is, in short, a growing feeling abroad that somehow there has to be a wider base for exercising the responsibility for shared activities, that the master-and-servant relation has to be elevated to one of more genuine partnership, that instead of "being done good to" people would prefer to be good and become better in a setting of reciprocal and mutual fellowship.

How can this change in emphasis be brought about?

How can a growing democratic impulse and a growing interest in having personality develop by giving it a chance for self-choice and self-growth in responsibility and in action, be embodied in the way the individual organization manages its affairs?

In order to answer these questions we have next to examine just what groups typically compose the kinds of institutions we are studying.

SPECIAL GROUP INTERESTS IN ORGANIZATIONS

As organizations increase in size it is inevitable that those associated with them come to have different functions and responsibilities and, as this differentiation becomes more marked, the outlooks and interests of these several sub-groups tend to become more pronounced and more specialized. If the central aim and unity of drive are to be preserved there has, therefore, to be attention paid to achieving unity in the light of these diverging group points of view; for such unity of drive and intention is the end which must be sought. If the organization is to succeed in fulfilling its aims, special individual or group points of view and interests have to be subordinated to or harmonized with those of the whole body as such. Individuals have to find satis-

faction and fulfilment in making the organized aim their own aim. They have to feel a genuine stake in the outcome, as affecting them. Such unity, such harmonizing, is not impossible. But neither is it spontaneous. It has to be striven for. Indeed, that is one of the major tasks of the executive leader.

What sub-groups, then, are we likely to find in our associations and institutions?

First, there is the *membership or clientele* itself. They do not necessarily stand first in point of time, for they are usually recruited after the organization opens its doors. But they do exist first in point of importance, since it is for them that the organization exists at all. The college exists for the student; the hospital for the sick; the charity society for the needy; the character-building agency for those whose characters it would help to mold. The danger, of course, always is that the administrators will tend to think almost unconsciously that the organization exists because it is a good thing that it shall exist!

Second, there is the *board of directors or trustees*.

Third, there is the *managerial and professional staff*, including both those who are paid and those who volunteer.

Fourth, there is the *housekeeping or maintenance staff*, including janitors, housekeepers, engineers, restaurant workers, etc.

And, finally, although it is not an integral group within the organization, there should be mentioned the *local community* in which the society does its work. Since the membership and often most of the financial support comes from the locality, the relations which the society has to it and to its special interests cannot be ignored in any effort to understand the interrelationships which have to be provided for and coördinated.

In general, it is true to say that today these several participating groups are constituted of different people, often coming from various social and economic levels in the community, usually coming from different age groups, and sometimes from different sexes. And each individual's view of the organization is normally affected by two major influences: first, his attitude as deter-

mined by what he does in the organization; second, his view as colored by his total individual, social, and economic outlook.

It cannot be too often said that our work—the preoccupations and attitudes built out of our vocational interest—tends largely to determine our personal view of the problems of groups with which we are associated. A banker on a board of directors tends to think of an organization in terms of budgets and balance sheets. A physical director tends to center his attention on matters of health. A dramatic club director thinks primarily that “the play’s the thing.”

And not only is this vocational coloring of all our thinking a fact, but we tend naturally and normally to think of ourselves in our institutional connections from the point of view of the satisfactions and benefits which we may personally seek and expect. There is no reason why this should not be so. But to acknowledge it is to realize that, because of the different occupational and personal factors and interests in any organization, there has to be a conscious, explicit effort to transcend special interests in favor of organization unity.

In relation to the several groups just identified, it is useful, therefore, to be candid and realistic as to just what these diversities of outlook may be in order to see precisely what threats to unity they may bring.

The members or clientele are expecting to realize certain satisfactions and benefits. It is sometimes a nice problem to be sure that they have not been led to expect benefits which are really quite secondary in the aims of the institution; so that it can by no means be taken for granted that they know that they want what the organization may want for them. A swimming pool or a winning football team, for example, may bring in members. But that they bring in members whose aims are in harmony with the association’s may not safely be assumed.

The board of directors as the ultimate administrative body is (or should be) concerned to define and give effect to the major aim, and to see that the reputation of the organization in the

local community is effectively maintained. Practically, it may become preoccupied with the provision of the sinews of war—with money-raising, balancing budgets, custody of real estate, and the like. The members, or in some cases the members' husbands, are often closely associated with business affairs; and their point of view is likely to be determined by business standards of sound practice, of success, and of administrative methods.

The managerial and professional staff are anxious to be sure that a good professional job is done with reference to more or less definite ideals and standards of good practice. But beyond that they have a natural self-interest to be concerned about the *sufficiency* of their incomes, the *security* of their tenure of employment, and their *status* at work in point of recognition, commendation, and advancement.

More particularly of the head executive himself it may be said that he tends often to identify himself and his interests with those of the board, rather than with those of his staff colleagues. His relations with the leaders of the board are likely to be so close and often of such long standing that he has become mentally one of them; and he thinks of all the rest of the employed group as responsible to the board through him.

The housekeeping staff has perhaps (though not necessarily) a somewhat lesser sense of professional pride. But they, too, have a definite and active concern for sufficiency, security, and status at their own level and to their own degree.

The local community, including donors and well-wishers, expect that the purpose avowed will be served efficiently and economically. They expect "good to be done"—although they are largely dependent upon the leaders of the organization itself to interpret to them what that "good" is and how it is being realized.

The disparity of views which the foregoing analysis reveals (however much it may be kept below the surface for any reason) creates a problem for the organization which cannot be ignored

or be fobbed off by bland assertions that "of course every one wants to do the right thing by the organization." It is what *is* the right thing that requires closer scrutiny. And the general line of attack upon this real problem must seemingly be that what is "right" for its several constituent groups has to be brought into open, explicit harmony with what is "right" for the organization.

Basic in thinking about organizations is the assumption or conclusion (from ample evidence) that they are no stronger or more effective in fulfilling their purpose than is the morale of all members and elements. Morale is the mobilization of enthusiasm, intelligence, and energy on behalf of the organized end or goal. Morale is indispensable to sustained creative achievement. It is more than assent or consent. It is zealous devotion. It is the reconciling and unifying of lesser interests and individual loyalties into a *unified* common interest or group loyalty.

How is morale achieved? Certainly not by denying the urgency of the several constituent group and individual points of view and interests. Rather it is by taking account of them, by satisfying them within reason within the frame and effort of the organization's activities. And this integration, where it occurs, is neither inevitable nor accidental. It is a deliberate product of two factors: of *structural* arrangements and of *personal* elements of effective, interpretative leadership. What these two factors mean in this connection and how they may be given effect, will presently be suggested.

But it may be well to remind ourselves first that we are not proceeding on any assumption that any particular organization is necessarily good in itself, or that institutions have special and unique interests and concerns which validly stand apart independent of the common interests which those associated with it have agreed they wished to share and forward. Our concern is not to advance every organization at all costs, but rather to be sure that in advancing organizations of agreed vitality, all the means to that advancement shall definitely serve all the associ-

ated individuals and their common aim. In fact, in some special cases the concern may be to discover how a given organization, carrying on with a confused or tepid or outgrown aim, can confront itself so candidly as to see whether its aim has lost its validity or whether it can usefully be restated and revitalized.

PRINCIPLES OF CREATIVE COÖRDINATION

This dilemma of organizations with their aims and individuals with *their* aims can be reconciled. *But we do need to have the tested methods for achieving this constantly before us—both in organizing to act and in leading and supervising the activities and the actors.* There is experience in the history of human institutions which supplies us with the clue to the answer. Out of his study of political life, for example, John Stuart Mill, in his classic *Essay on Representative Government*, reminds us that “the rights and interests of each or any person are only secure from being disregarded when the person interested is himself able and habitually disposed to stand up for them.” And he says also that “A people may be unprepared for good institutions; but to kindle a desire for them is a necessary part of the preparation.”

Two related principles are based on these truths which throw considerable light on the methods that will integrate group and individual aims. The first is:

The principle of the representation of interests, which says that every special group's interest is safeguarded only as there is an explicit voicing of that interest in the councils of the organization by a representative chosen by and from that group, when issues which affect it are under consideration.

The principle of coördination changes the emphasis from the special groups to the organization and says that the organization functions smoothly only as there is this conscious, coördinative process of advance agreement throughout the organization upon the general policies and methods which will give its aims effect; and that this process requires explicit organized group or func-

tional representation in deliberations upon issues which will affect that group.

It is unwise to be more specific as to what will constitute a special "group or functional interest" in any given organization, since this has to be defined in relation to the structure and elaborateness of that organization and also in relation to whether the problem under consideration concerns the organization broadly as a whole or is primarily departmental.

These principles will find equally fruitful application (1) up and down in a whole organization's vertical line of authority; or (2) within one department; or (3) horizontally among a number of correlated departments which are seeking to integrate their activities. But in respect to whole organizations, some such identification of special interests as the several mentioned above probably achieves an approximation of accuracy where representation and coördination are being sought.

APPLICATIONS OF PRINCIPLES OF COORDINATION

By way of suggesting in more particular terms what these principles may imply in action, I submit a number of propositions which seem at once a sound basis for organization and a sound solution of the dilemma of reconciling institutional and individual objectives.

1. The group in which ultimate authority and responsibility are vested (e. g., the board of directors) should be explicitly composed of representatives of those major sub-groups which are found to have distinctive outlooks and desires (e. g., the four above-mentioned).

2. If the board of directors is thus constituted, it can then safely become the defensible and logical place where objectives should be established and major policies adopted.

3. The sub-groups to be explicitly represented should be so consciously organized as groups that they can select delegates and have their representatives effectively represent them both in initiation of changes and in interpretation of decisions reached.

4. Agenda of board meetings should go to its members long enough in advance to allow a representative reflection of opinion to be secured and brought to the meetings. Also, new proposals of the board should go back through sub-group representatives for a sounding out of the opinion of constituents.

5. When the board is thus constituted, the general secretary (or whatever title is given to the head executive agent of the board) should be responsible in a major way for the execution of decisions of the board.

6. The number of people reporting directly to this head executive should be limited to the number with whom he or she can have continuous effective contacts as an executive supervisor and leader. When this number is more than six the danger of inadequate supervision creeps in. The fact that the head executive can and should have useful personal contacts with a far larger number of individuals than this, should not be confused with this necessary simplifying of his direct supervisory responsibility.

7. Where there is a "national council" of the organization as a whole with which the local body is affiliated, the line of the adoption and utilization of policies nationally recommended should be only through action of the local board.

These several propositions merit serious consideration with a view to direct, even if gradual, application by organizations and institutions, for the following reasons:

A. A board thus constituted is representative and democratic in a vital sense. It brings it about that all the special interests which have to be reckoned with in reconciling the aim of the whole with the aims of its parts are being currently taken account of. Real integration of aim, policy, and method can thus take place—if there is proper leadership.

B. The aim of the organization can be kept more constantly and clearly in view when all groups participate in considering what the aim is and how it is to be given effect. The danger of

institutionalism, of organization for organization's sake, is thus greatly minimized. And positively the sense of responsibility of each member and group for the forwarding of the aim of the organization *as a whole* is thus assured as in no other possible way.

C. The aim of fellowship with its implications of equal consideration of all members is thus translated into administrative structure and method.

D. The controlling attitudes, policies and methods of the whole organization are thus *at the outset and continuously* considered, adopted, interpreted, and transmitted in a way best calculated to assure the advance agreement and eager coöperation of all concerned.

E. Every one in the organization is thus brought to feel a positive and creative stake in the success of the organization. This is true because they have a stake in the initiation and clarification of aims, in the determination of policies relating to sufficiency, security and status—in short, in seeing to it that organized ends and individual aspirations become harmonized into a coöperative whole.

Another way of putting the reasons why these two principles can be applied so beneficially is supplied in Miss M. P. Follett's phrasing of the case for conscious attention to the coördinative process. She has suggested that the success of this process is assured because—

- a. it achieves a reciprocal relating of all the factors in a situation;
- b. it achieves direct contact of the responsible people concerned;
- c. it achieves all this in the early stages of common deliberation; and
- d. it becomes thus, as it should be, a continuing process.*

* These principles were enunciated by Mary P. Follett in several as yet unpublished essays. See, for a summary of her views, "The Problem of Organization," by L. Urwick, in *Bulletin of the Federated Management Societies*, New York, July, 1935.

Several objections will, of course, be made to the general position reflected in these propositions. It will be said that the professional and housekeeping staff are merely the employees of the board; that the members or clientele often do not know what they want or what is for their own best good; that the board does not need or would resent the interference of other groups in major decisions; that this whole process is too circuitous, cumbersome, and slow where important issues have to be decided; that it conduces to an attitude of "bargaining" between the organization and one or more of its component groups.

An honest re-reading of these familiar objections will suggest, I submit, to any fair-minded person that they all arise out of a false assumption. These objections assume that certain people are charged to "do good" to others in ways they may safely determine will be good for those others. They assume that in associations created for subjective ends of growth, development, personality enrichment, truth-seeking, these ends can be achieved without active measures and means for giving responsibility, for requiring choices, for fostering consideration of ends and means —*among those who are being guided* no less than among those who guide.

This process of influencing or educating or developing others is in reality a *two-way process*. The benefactor and the benefited are both changed by the process; so too are the teacher and the student, the leader and the follower, the director and the directed. This is not just rhetoric; it is an accurate appraisal of what happens when two groups enter into any close human relations. And if this is literally true, it should be made true also in the definitely *organized* relations encouraged and provided to give a framework to the human relationships which actually exist.

It seems, also, as if the objections that are usually faced here arise in part out of a reluctance to admit that human conflicts and disparities of interest are a fact when associated efforts become elaborate. Many people animated by good will forget

that conflict has its constructive and creative rôle. Yet if an organization as a whole is not strong, clear, and confident enough about what it wants to do to be able to compose the kinds of internal differences which I have suggested as already present and as always potentially likely to become more articulate, then one of two things is wrong. Either what the organization wants to do is not clearly seen by all as being worthy of every one's effort to "get on the band wagon." Or, to put it more positively, the leadership in the organization is not sufficiently effective to summon all to an individually satisfying loyalty which rises above lesser differences.

We have, then, up to this point considered the organized aims and presumably found them good. Let us now take a look at the part to be played by leadership in creating unity.

LEADERSHIP AS AN AID TO COÖRDINATION

I have said that organization morale and unified operation depend (1) upon a structure and machinery which aids coördination and (2) upon the right quality of personal leadership to facilitate the coördinating.

Turn now to the contribution which leadership peculiarly must make. It should, in a word, galvanize the whole process of conferring and integrating diverse interests into a smooth-running experience of human relations among the individuals whose efforts are being unified.

This means and implies a number of supporting factors. It means that the leader is constantly holding the main, common objective in view so that in deliberative conferences on policy and methods some one is always bringing discussion back to the main track and toward the anticipated terminal point of agreement.

He it is also who will be specially concerned in the various groups where he is overseeing the coördinative process, to see that there is (1) a complete agreed body of facts available about matters at issue; (2) an open consideration of every different

point of view before any given deliberative body; (3) the encouraging of subordination of differences in favor of unity of drive; (4) the effort to assure that indecision changes into choice and action; (5) provision for the process of acquainting the entire membership with decisions and of interpreting them persuasively; (6) the careful delegating of responsibility for carrying out decisions.*

Experience is conclusive that unless the leader assumes these responsibilities, they are not fulfilled and the process of coördination halts and breaks down. And in such organizations as those here discussed, the general secretary is the logical executive to undertake this leading rôle. He it is who definitively should take the *whole* view of the whole organization. He it is who should have a sufficiently sympathetic and comprehensive view of the entire operation to facilitate the bringing of different outlooks together.

Also, more than this is required, even to aid coördination. There must be continuously sympathetic account being taken and consideration being given to points of view and claims advanced by sincere minority groups which want to be unified with the whole but feel that they have some special insight or emphasis of which adequate account is not being taken. And this consideration must go beyond the usual efforts to integrate differences which are always arising about minor points. It has to do, where profound issues are raised or joined, with the general executive's own insight and prophetic vision of the larger trend that affairs are taking as they relate to the protests of these minorities. I am, in short, not implying that a facile smoothing over of differences or a mollifying of minorities is the road for the executive to follow. On occasion his line of policy may be so under fire that the effort to coördinate may have to be preceded by his own searching of soul as to the implications of the issue which the minority has raised.

* For further elaboration of all this, see my book, *The Art of Leadership*, Chap. VII.

In order, next, to be a little more specific about how the general executive works with the various groups which have to be coöordinated, a few suggestions will be offered about his relations: first with the board; next with the staff, and the balance of the paid employees; and with committees in general.

THE GENERAL EXECUTIVE AND THE BOARD

The board of directors or trustees, especially as at present constituted and therefore often related not too closely to the day-by-day functioning of the organization, inevitably creates certain problems for the general executive which can be solved only by paying special heed to them. In the first place, the relation of this executive to the board may need clarification. Is he or she the "hired man" or agent of the board? Or is the definitive leadership vested in this individual with the board acting in the background as guide and counselor? If the board does hire the general executive (which would be usual), does this jeopardize his basic effectiveness as leader?

It seems clear that the general executive should ideally have sufficient capacity and personality to rise above the fact that he is technically in the employ of the board and responsible legally to it, and for all practical purposes assume the acknowledged leadership. This is proposed as sound not because this executive should dominate the board or assume that he has a vested right in his position. But both from the standpoint of new vision and planning and also from the point of view of clearly centralized operating responsibility, *there has to be a head*.

And if the general secretary is to be this head with the greatest effectiveness, it is probably desirable that he should enter into a contract with the board for specified periods. This would give him reasonable independence during incumbency while giving the board periodic opportunity to renew the contract or not. Obviously, of course, the whole relationship should always rise above the level of contract to a level of fellowship and harmonious intention. But the fact remains that the method of relating

the general executive to the organization should be explicit, should encourage real leading guidance from him, and should get away from any suggestion that he is only the agent or mouth-piece of the board.

The good executive, however, carries weight with his board, not because he has an iron-clad contract, but because he works with them in ways that get results both he and they think important. Real leadership on his part, therefore, consists in applying most fully the collective wisdom of the whole board to problems arising as to the creative guidance of the organization. Lofty as this ideal may sound, it calls in a workaday world for the most practical application on the part of the executive of foresight, tact, and persuasiveness. If even a good board is to perform at its best, it must continuously feel not only that there are new worlds to conquer, but that it *can* conquer some of them. To the end of strengthening this mood the following hints may be helpful:

1. The general executive should get the board to consider problems when they have become, or threaten to become, troublesome to the board. There is a wise sense of timing to be employed in choosing the psychological moment when a difficulty is imminent, genuine, and pressing. We have always to remember that people think to best advantage *when a problem is disturbing them*. Sometimes the shrewd leader will be able to foresee and anticipate problems so that they can be considered as pressing before they become too crucial. But even this can only be done when the board can be made genuinely concerned by the issue. Sometimes, also, it will be good tactics to let some issue come to a crisis (at least from the board's point of view), in order that the board will be aroused, will deliberate, and act.

It should be axiomatic that problems will be faced only when all involved recognize them *as* problems. It is the board's and not the executive's awareness of a problem which alone will bring its members to grips with it.

2. The executive should be sure that the board has the same

data to work upon in solving a problem as he himself has had. And if he has a solution which he wants the board to reach, he must give the members of the board time to be exposed to the same data and to think through a solution in much the same way that he has done.

3. The executive may bring issues to the point of being felt to be problems by the board, in terms, for example, of (a) sharp conflicts of attitude and points of view within the organization as a whole (as, for instance, when a radical group wishes to hire the association's meeting hall); (b) financial shortages, threatened losses, or budget difficulties; (c) confusion, vagueness, or opposition on the part of any considerable group of members regarding aims or methods of realizing them; (d) criticisms by outsiders.

4. In dealing with the board, collectively and individually, it is important for the executive to know the kinds of approach which are most effective. Some will see a new project first in terms of its cost; others in terms of the prestige it will bring to the association—or even to themselves; others will consider first the religious values involved or their responsible relationship to "the cause"; still others will feel most deeply their identification with the group of members concerned in the project.

Similarly, the manner of presenting data to individual members most effectively will differ with the mental characteristics of each. Some learn most readily through the ear—through being told in conversation. Some prefer to get information through reading. Some are predominantly motor-minded and acquire ideas best in the arena of action.

5. These observable differences in human reactions suggest the truth that often some of the most effective work with board members will be done *with individuals between meetings* no less than at meetings. The good executive leader will constantly keep himself on such a personal and social footing with his board members that this type of contact and interchange can be of a friendly and informal character.

6. The general executive will be persuasive also to the extent that he is clear as to *what* he wants in major matters; knows *why* he wants it; and is reasonably clear as to *how* in definite terms it can be obtained. This does not imply that he tries to override others, but rather that his sense of direction is clear while he tries to be effective in persuasion.

7. A further tactic in his persuasiveness will be a discreet use of the reënforcement of his own views by calling in those who for any reason will have weight with the board. This may, for example, mean using members of a "national council," representatives of similar organizations from other localities, public notables, or experts in special fields.

8. The general executive should also be at pains to keep the work of the organization "sold" to his board in terms of concrete achievement. This argues that he should study to be sure he uses methods of reporting and adopts measures of progress which will be at once as definite, objective, and persuasive as possible both to his board and to donors in general.

In organizations with subjective aims this task presents real difficulties. And one danger that the entire administrative group of an organization may have to fight is the temptation to apply quantitative measures to qualitative facts. In an organization like the Y. M. C. A. or the Y. W. C. A., for example, the interpretation to the boards, as at present constituted, of youth itself and of its aspirations, its problems, and its vocabulary, may well be a major assignment of the general executive. (If the board is constituted as recommended early in this study, this kind of interpretation will tend to take place spontaneously and in the natural course of events within the board itself.)

9. In line with the assignment suggested above, the executive should aim to make all board meetings educational processes in the best sense. This means that however much decision *making* may seem to be the major rôle of the board, the process of decision *reaching* should be patiently (though tactfully) kept prominently in mind by the executive leader.

10. Real issues of policy will arise with boards. It may even be true that they are destined to arise more acutely in the future than in the past. Where such differences seem for the time being too serious to reconcile, it may be good tactics for the executive to ask the board, when its members are doubtful about a new proposal, *to allow it to be tried for an experimental period* of agreed length, after which results will be reviewed and a reconsideration of the policy take place. It was a wise philosopher who observed that many a horse which did not know it was thirsty when led to water found that it liked to drink!

When an issue becomes really acute, the executive may even feel impelled finally to say, "What you ask me to do runs counter to my judgment and to my conscience. You certainly wouldn't want me to act contrary to my own deep conviction in this matter?" Usually the answer to this question would be a renewed effort to integrate conflicting views. But if the board at such a point and on an issue felt to be fundamental by the executive demands that he take a line of action opposed to his conviction, there may be but one course to be honorably followed: to ask the board to allow him to resign from fulfilling the remainder of his contract.

Undoubtedly a little more courage and independence in times of crisis would strengthen the professional standing of staff members, rather than the opposite.

It may be objected that the foregoing counsels imply too great an attempt at manipulation of people on the part of the executive. But all that has been said above only brings into the open what is more or less the working method of the successful leader anyway. Manipulation in a certain sense occurs inevitably where leaders are trying to get things done. The only serious question is as to whether what the leader is trying to do is truly valuable; and if it is, he is not only within his rights but he is merely being intelligent if he studies the methods of personal influence which do in fact prove effective.

Moreover, in all honesty it should be acknowledged that others

with whom the executive is working closely are probably studying him with some care (and should!) to discover "how his mind works," and what lines of approach will find him responsive. Here again we should admit the inevitable existence of a two-way process in which the odds are by no means always in favor of the executive!

Again it may be objected that the suggestions above imply a slighting regard for the value of the board to the organization. Nothing is farther from my intention than this. It has to be recognized that the people who give generously or supervise the expenditure of resources which others have given are naturally concerned to be sure that money is wisely spent. More than that, it is a wise check upon the organization that this should be so. The keeper of the common purse should certainly disperse funds only on the assurance that the outlay is justifiable. This is quite a different thing, however, from letting him who pays the piper call the tune!

Indeed, instead of minimizing the board's importance, which may be a real danger, I venture to suggest that its members should be *more* used, especially where they are able to make contributions (not financial) which can be wrought into the active day-by-day work of the agency. General secretaries could in many cases draft much superior ability for direct service if they were to devote more attention to this possibility. There is unquestionably an educational service to be rendered in this direction from which every one would benefit—the membership and staff no less than the volunteer.

THE GENERAL EXECUTIVE AS ADMINISTRATOR

If, as suggested earlier, the general executive should have only six executives reporting and directly responsible to him, one of his first problems as his institution increases in size is to see to it that a logical and practical division of responsibilities and functions is achieved. For example, it should be possible to place

all the housekeeping or maintenance staff under one person qualified by training in institutional management to head up this work. What other duties and functions are sufficiently major to be sensibly grouped together for executive oversight will depend upon the size of the organization and upon the nature and variety of its program and activities.

Irrespective of the size of the organization, however, the general executive should have a clear picture, *preferably in writing*, of all the duties and functions for which some one has to be responsible. To see that all duties are allocated, it is essential from the standpoint of operating efficiency, that the general executive knows what he is responsible for and exactly what each of his staff is responsible for. There is good reason to believe that general executives tend to try to carry too great a load, to have their fingers in too many pies, to be responsible for too great a variety of functions. In periods of financial retrenchment this may be inevitable. But it should be a matter for major concern that the top executive have time enough to be sure that *he and his organization are constantly holding to the main objective.*

Upon him rests the special responsibility for adjusting programs, activities, public appeals, and public relations of all kinds, to the constantly shifting trends of public interest and of community needs. The basic underlying aim may in a sense seem to remain "the same, yesterday, today and forever." But the translation of that aim into terms understandable by and appealing to each generation undoubtedly requires adaptations of appeal and program. This is equally true in the church, in education, in social work, in charity organization societies, and in associations like the Y. M. C. A. or the Y. W. C. A. The articulation of aim with the current sense of need, the dramatizing of purpose in harmony with the felt concerns of each generation—these are perennial problems. And that general executive is avoiding his major task who does not plan to devote definite hours to sober study of these inevitable transitions of emphasis in community interest and need. In this aspect of his work he

has always the problem of being sure he is carrying along with him the understanding and coöperative support of his entire professional staff.

What this involves in specific efforts to know at close range the local community, to know the broader trends of social, political, economic and religious change, to know the new experience of similar bodies in other localities, can only be suggested here.* But these are all responsibilities for the discharge of which the executive *must have free time*. And he should, of course, have the kind of grasp of his task which fires him with zeal to assume these responsibilities continuously throughout his working career. The world does not stand still; and no institution or program is ever once and for all adapted to fulfilling its mission most effectively. New times are always demanding new measures and new men—or men with minds open to new ideas.

The general executive should, then, identify clearly the operating functions his organization has to perform and see to it that some person is assigned to carry out each one. The duties, responsibilities, and authority of each departmental executive should be assigned to him just as definitely as possible and with clear recognition of the amount of work the individual can reasonably do.

He should in this connection see that the distinction is observed between the powers and rights of "line" as against staff executives. A housekeeper, for example, is a line executive—one in a line of clear authority from a higher executive; whereas a public-relations executive is in an advisory, consultative or facilitating "staff" function in relation to the entire organization, without specific operating responsibilities.

The general executive next has the duty of assuring that all the agreed functions are performed. This implies that both by personal contacts and by whatever forms of reports are most explicit, he is supervising the forwarding of activities.

* See, as an excellent example of method of study here, the check-list in the *Woman's Press*, September, 1935, 413-416.

He has also the major responsibility for coördination of all activities into a unified, consistent whole in relation to his vision of objectives. This, as has already been said, involves effective use of structures, that is, coördinating agencies such as committees, and the supplying of personal leadership within the coördinating processes themselves.

In order to do all this well, he should have a conscious mastery of performance in the following areas of individual and social psychology:

1. the steps in the problem-solving process (see my *Human Nature and Management*, Chap. VIII, "How to Encourage Reasoning");
2. the steps in the teaching process and its correlate, the learning process (see my *Human Nature and Management*, Chap. VI, "The Learning Process"; Chap. XVI, "The Technique of Training"; see also my *The Art of Leadership*, Chap. VIII, "The Leader as Teacher"; Chap. XVI, "How to Train Leaders");
3. the implications of the "psychology of the evolving situation" (see my *Human Nature and Management*, Chap. II, "The Psychological Point of View"; my *The Art of Leadership*, 276-282);
4. the technique of conference and committee action (see my *Human Nature and Management*, Chap. XIV, "The Technique of Group Action"; also my *The Art of Leadership*, Chap. X, "The Leader as Conference Chairman").

Since I have elsewhere, as indicated, discussed these four skills in some detail, I take the liberty of referring the reader to those discussions, which are more extended and adequate than space here allows.

A further truth making for realism in executive action is one which underlies this entire study; namely, that there has to be a parallelism and interdependence between two kinds of effort if organizations are to function properly. There is an inherent complementary duality, for example, between

good will and good methods
attitude and structure
intention and performance
motive and mechanism

And if any of the mental sets suggested in the left-hand column above are ever to be translated out of the realm of wish into that of tangible attainment, this can be done only through specific action. The mental state has always to be implemented to be effective, and the quality of the attitude is really no better than that of the overt performance.

THE GENERAL EXECUTIVE AND HIS STAFF

In relation to all the individuals who are hired to help carry on the work and in relation to volunteers as well, some one or more executives is in fact responsible for the terms and conditions of employment and for the effectiveness with which all these individual efforts are related to the total organization effort. This whole task involves a considerable variety of duties which have now come to be spoken of as the *personnel function* in management. Briefly, its work is usually considered to include selection, training, provision of suitable working conditions, negotiation of proper terms of employment (wages, hours, vacations, etc.), adjustments of individual difficulties, provisions as to accident, old age, and illness, and all the more general features which may be found to benefit morale and generate a coöperative spirit.

The detailed ways in which an organization decides to handle the foregoing matters would constitute its *personnel policy*. And obviously every organization, *irrespective of its size*, and whether it realizes it or not, does have this personnel function to carry out and does have a personnel policy controlling its human dealings. It is important that the existence of this function be always clearly acknowledged, however small the group being

directed, and that the policy be one which has been conscientiously and thoughtfully arrived at.

There are several ways to assure adequate recognition of this function and explicit adoption of sound policies. Many associations find, for example, that a personnel committee can formalize concern over these matters in the large and guide individual executives in giving sympathetic effect to the personnel policy in its individual applications. But for this personnel committee to work to best effect I suggest that the principle of representation of interests as set forth above should certainly be applied in the selection of its membership. The typical present practice of having personnel policies set essentially by the board and applied through the agency of the general executive seems unduly autocratic and not mindful enough of the structural conditions which will help to build morale, confidence, and unity among the enlisted personnel.

Even if the organization is large enough to warrant the employment of a full-time personnel executive (or have one executive, such as the general secretary, who is responsible for the personnel function on a part-time basis), the value of a representative advisory personnel committee can be great; for it can help to facilitate the whole task of formulating and interpreting the policies which are to prevail.

Whatever formal provision is made for assigning responsibility for this function, however, it has always to be borne in mind that the personnel policy in many of its details gets its effect with individual workers mainly through the attitude and behavior of their own department heads. And to that extent the personnel policy is actually *no better than the behavior of every supervisor demonstrates it to be*. Every supervisory person has to treat his own group in line with the prevailing policies—or the policies do not prevail. There is a continuing major administrative responsibility here to be sure that all supervisors and departments are in fact translating a good policy in good ways.

One other general observation should be made about the atti-

tude with which the personnel function is approached. Each individual employed or volunteering in the organization is charged with the carrying on of some function—or he should not be there. All are in this sense “functionaries,” and all are in this sense equally indispensable to the total effort. There may be “higher” and “lower” in respect to the quality of skill required for a given function; and there may be “more” or “less” in respect to the available supply of certain skills. But there is a genuine *equality of need* from the organization’s standpoint for every one who is engaged upon a real function. This equality of need argues something vital as to the equality of consideration which should be accorded to every individual in relating him to the institution.

It is impossible to generalize as to what will constitute a good personnel policy or what will be found to be “fair” terms of employment in any given case. As to the former, a broad set of desirable standards is today generally acknowledged to exist and these we have set forth in an earlier work.* As to the latter, local circumstances will of course be governing. But that certain classifications of work and ranges of compensation for these can be established has already been repeatedly established.**

There is a grave, if not openly admitted danger, however, that in organizations of the kind here under consideration the boards or the general executive will try almost unconsciously to exploit the loyalty and devotion of the paid staff, and, because they are working “in a good cause,” will exert pressure on them to accept terms and conditions of employment which are really inadequate.

This is a delicate but a real issue. (Here again is an issue accentuated by present methods of relatively autocratic administrative set-up.) This again points to the importance of a reasonably objective set of standards regarding the professional

* See *Personnel Administration: Its Principles and Practice*, by Ordway Tead and H. C. Metcalf (New York, 1933).

** See, for example, the excellent pamphlet, *A Personnel Manual*, by Jessamine C. Fenner (New York, 1933, The Woman’s Press).

worth of positions relatively within the organization and comparatively with other organizations. Certainly the apologetic or self-deprecating note is to be avoided by employees in dealing with boards on these matters. Here is not merely a question of balancing budgets. There may be on occasion a deeper question as to whether the board and the community are sufficiently convinced of the value of an organization to be able to compensate its staff well enough for them to serve at all with real efficiency.

All this is not said to belittle the glory of sacrificial work by a devoted staff. But the laborer is worthy of his hire. And beyond a certain trial period, inability to secure support may be due to community obtuseness to its own needs; or it may be due to the fact that the organization has not demonstrated that it serves a vital function.

One thing is clear. In a worldly society, preoccupied with many things, laborers in the vineyard of the mind and spirit should appraise themselves and their work with self-respect and a decent sense of self-worth. Humility has for literal survival to be balanced by a certain self-assurance, by a confident awareness of one's value. This means, for one thing, that the general executive endeavors to meet the members of the board and the donors *as a complete equal*. The fact that his standard of "success" and "getting on" may be different from theirs alters not at all the fact that *he believes that he and his staff have a function in society which is vital and significant*. Unless the employees hold their heads high and are not on the defensive about their tasks, they will not be accorded the consideration they merit.

A still further factor today increasingly complicates the personnel work of our institutions, particularly in relation to the non-professional employees. Under the new federal social security legislation (1935), employees of all sorts of philanthropic and meliorative agencies are to be exempted from the provisions as to the unemployment compensation and old-age pensions. This means that in the labor market such organizations will stand at a distinct disadvantage in offering jobs to people because of

the lesser protection against these risks which they will get. It may well mean a tendency to find the less preferred workers the only ones available for and willing to take positions. To the extent that this proves true, it will be a handicap to good morale. Somehow, it would seem that *equivalent advantages* will have to be offered to employees of all these agencies, or their personnel policies will be competitively unfavorable and the employed personnel will be less satisfactory.

THE GENERAL EXECUTIVE AND COMMITTEE WORK

I have alluded to the importance of being sure that whatever committee action takes place makes use of current knowledge about improved ways to carry on conferences. But a few further special observations are in order with special reference to strengthening the processes of executive coördination.

Two extremes of practice are frequently to be noted here, both of which will lessen the coördinative value of committee work. Either an organization minimizes the value of committees because of the claim that they lead to confused responsibility and delay in action. Or their value is too highly regarded and too much executive responsibility is given them. It is to preserve a proper balance between these two extremes that the following conclusions are offered about the proper limits upon committee functioning in relation to the executive task.

If we recall that executive work involves planning, supervising, coördinating, laying down policies, and the like, it is clear that committees can often forward these processes. A House Committee, a Budget Committee, or a Personnel Committee may correctly have delegated to it a definite mandate in a segment of the executive field.

One major task is to be sure that it does its job. This assurance rests ultimately with the general executive and directly with the chairman of the committee. Or if it is a committee of the board, appointed by its head, this same responsibility would fall upon the chairman of the board.

The committee has become for the purpose in hand the agent of the executive. And if fruitful committee action is to result, the chairman of the committee should be looked upon as the agent of the executive in accomplishing the committee's assignment and as the agent of the committee in dealings with the executive. The chairman is the one the executive has a right to look to for accomplishment.

Several conditions have to be fulfilled:

1. The mandate to the committee from the executive must be clear—as to subject, scope, and authority.
2. The executive should look to the committee chairman for results and the committee (in the absence of definite assignment to others) should look upon its chairman as its own focal point and executive agent.
3. A time limit should be set, in general and in particular, for the fulfilling of a committee's mandate.
4. If certain overt actions are to be taken (such as submitting a budget, hiring a housekeeper, directing the alterations or repairs of plant) some *member* of the committee as an individual should be specifically charged with the task. By its nature the committee is fitted to take counsel, reach agreements, adopt policies (the board of directors itself being a case in point). To this extent it is correctly executive. But equally by its nature the committee as such is *not* qualified for activity which requires individualized, clear-cut, active performance of specific duties. The danger of confusion here has always been great. A committee, for example, is charged to draw up a budget. This is a legitimate delegation of a certain executive responsibility. But the work gets done only as the whole task on its operating side is broken down into a group of correlated but individualized duties and *each member is directed to specific tasks* so that his labors comprise a needed part of the whole assignment. To assume that because "a committee is going to do this," it will necessarily be done is, of course, fatuous. A committee does something only

as its members each do the right thing. And that depends largely upon the guidance of the chairman.

5. All of this makes the selection of the committee's membership a matter of great importance. Only those should be selected to be members who have a vital contribution to make to the carrying out of its mandate. This implies contributions of knowledge, of points of view, of desires, of skills—as related to the purpose.

6. Committee action is further facilitated by (a) a careful *recording* of decisions reached; (b) a careful *transmission* of decisions to the proper executive person or group; (c) a careful *timing* of meetings and interim periods to be sure that the elapsed times are reasonable to assure that accomplishment will result.

In a word, committees can be executive, *within the limits set forth above*. They can be responsible, effective, and not unduly dilatory. Indeed, they are an indispensable means for doing certain kinds of things. Fundamentally they are agents of integration—for bringing agreement out of disagreement or confusion. However much they may seem to involve delay and to generate too much talk, they are nevertheless *the price of advance agreement*. And within the given limits, nothing else can take their place. They are a tool of the democratic, knowledge-pooling and desire-harmonizing process which cannot be otherwise forwarded.

And when committees fail, as they sometimes do, it is because the limits to their rôle are not clearly understood or because they have not benefited by proper leadership from the chairman.

PROGRAMS IN RELATION TO AIMS

Ideally, the activities and program which an organization carries on are the tangible evidence of the ways by which it believes it can realize its avowed aims.

Practically, all programs get crystallized and rigid, and the need for revaluation is perennial. Why is this? One factor

in character-building associations, for example, is that sometimes parts of a program are originally developed with the secondary aim of "getting members into the association." Then, when they are in, they will presumably be directed to or exposed to the primary aim. As tactics this is, no doubt, legitimate. But the danger always is that the organization itself and the members on their side will get so immersed in carrying on the secondary efforts that they have not the means nor the time nor even the inclination for the main drive.

Another factor making for the outmoding of programs is the changing vocabulary, idiom, and outlook of the oncoming generations. Words are subtle instruments. The danger that they will not mean the same thing to different people and particularly to different age groups is tremendous. Such words, for example, as "democracy," "personality," "self-expression," "self-realization," "character," "leadership," "socialism," "God," "Christianity," are only hints as to the points at which confusion can arise as to what people are talking about when they use them. Also, there are fashions and fads in words, which cannot be ignored when it comes to voicing and articulating the aims of organizations with subjective ends.

A third factor is that, because every organization operates in the social setting of a given time and place, the social (or total combined external) influences playing upon that body change from time to time. Today, for example, speaking in general terms, we are seemingly coming out of an age of so-called "individualism"—where the rugged qualities of individualistic assertiveness, of acquisitiveness, of competitive zeal for personal advancement, were wrought into the outlook of the generation. The emphasis increasingly seems now to be upon efforts in all areas of living which are associated, coöperative, organizational, and collective in the broadest sense.

Unquestionably the character qualities now favored differ markedly from the ones favored in the nineteenth century. Do programs and policies take sufficient account of this?

A fourth factor derived from the third is that economic forces may so alter the status and relations of different groups in the community that the question, "Whom are we ministering to?" may present a vexing problem. Certain organizations may perhaps reasonably claim to be largely serving people who come from the middle class. Here again we are confronted with another ambiguous wording. Who composes this group and what are its aspirations, needs, and problems, seemingly present an urgent problem to some at least of those organizations here being discussed—a problem closely related to the evaluation of their programs. It is not inconceivable that the whole relation of this "middle class" to the rest of society in America, in respect to its political interests, its social demands, and its economic insecurities, is today in such fundamental transition that any organization which is in fact serving a middle-class clientele can hardly avoid bewilderment within its own ranks as to the objectives it holds, their validity, and interpretation.

A final factor, again related in part to vocabulary but related also to attitude, is the lessening interest and belief in the idea of "doing good to others," as that has been popularly interpreted. In a profound way and in the long look, people in a democracy somehow feel that they do not want "to be done good to." There is to the sensitive spirit a world of difference between the attitude which says, "Love thy neighbor as thyself," and that which says, "My ideal is to do good to others." The one is a high, disinterested conception of a consciousness of a reciprocal relation of mutual value among individuals in society. The other tends to be a self-centered interest in using the influence one can exert upon others as the means for one's own "salvation." The one recognizes that most people do in fact make a contribution to well-being through their normal pursuits, and could undoubtedly make a far greater contribution if the neighborly aim were consciously and intelligently striven for. The other, especially if carried to a logical extreme, means that always in conduct some one must be the benefactor and some

one else the beneficiary, and that the beneficiary may be hard-pressed to find out how he in his turn may be the benefactor. The one is spiritually democratic; the other spiritually aristocratic or snobbish—and it may even be priggish.

The fact is that people do not want to "be served." They may want to be taught and guided and inspired. The sound relationship (with its resultant attitudes) in contemporary society is one of mutuality, of reciprocal creativeness, of common striving for ends jointly arrived at and coöperatively held. It implies and looks for a transfer of the attitude of neighborliness and friendly concern from one to another in wider and wider spheres of influence. The seer and the prophet will always do us the great service of supplying the vision which leads us on over the next hill. But the acceptance of that vision is an individual act of voluntary self-enlistment for those who can be helped to see the light and "follow in his train."

It should be pointed out, therefore, that the use of the word "fellowship," for example, in voicing the objectives of both the Y. M. C. A. and the Y. W. C. A. is a splendid recognition of the difference of emphasis and attitude that I am trying to express as between yesterday and today. The problem now becomes one of translating and dramatizing that fellowship conception into both structures and program contents in order that they may in fact encourage the growth in human associations of this democratic attitude and of this sense of spiritual equality.

If it be objected that all of these factors do not in reality have much bearing upon the aims and programs of organizations, I can only answer that the testimony which comes to me from within the ranks of the organizations themselves is somewhat disconcerting. The questions are heard too often: "What *do* we stand for today? How shall we appeal to the new generation? Is our organization performing the function it should?"

And if this kind of corrosive doubt exists in any wide-spread

way, there is but one thing to do. *The organization must re-examine its objectives and its program content.*

Is it doing *in today's terms* the essential thing it originally set out to do?

Is it at work upon its own "big idea"?

It is only after these questions are faced and answered that the program problem can be constructively attacked.

But when they are answered, I believe a second conclusion may perhaps then be reached: namely, that the content of the program is less important than its *intent*. It is not so much what is being done as it is *how that contributes to the major aim*, which has to be considered. A rooming house can be run "to the glory of God," or it can just be one more cheap place for young people to live decently. Of course there are more and less effective forms of activity. A discriminating sense as to which activities have presumably greater educational value will give much guidance here. But the idea, for example, that certain parts of a program are "religious" and certain other parts are secular, is pernicious. Either the whole program all the time is shot through with a sense of worthfulness, worthiness, wholeness, and holiness; or it is not. And the effort has, of course, to be to infuse a clear sense of the main drive into *every* action and effort of the organization, whether it be running a basket-ball game, renting rooms, or directing a janitor.

Is this particular activity counting definitely and heavily in carrying us on toward our goal?

That is the question which boards of trustees and head executives must unflinchingly ask themselves about the entire program at not too infrequent intervals.

And it is not impossible that executives will occasionally find under this persistent questioning that they are carrying along a rather heavy freight of out-dated, superfluous, or inefficient activities, which if thrown out the window would give the organization more time and resources for activities nearer to the core of the task it originally set itself to do.

BUILDING THE PROGRAM

I have throughout this study been suggesting, at least by implication, that many of the problems faced by meliorative organizations today are new, in form if not in substance. Or, if they are not new, they are certainly urgent and pressing for attention with new insistence.

If I may attempt to locate the heart of the difficulty faced, the problem is how to make the appeal of the good life persuasive and controlling in the life of the oncoming generation in the face of the uncertainties, confusions, insecurities, conflicts, and fears which the total social situation of our day presents. This is a difficulty which has distinctly dual aspects: that of individual adjustment and that of the conditions and limiting influences of the environment. To put it another way, each individual is the product of personal drives and capacities and a product no less of the whole intellectual, economic, and spiritual climate of his time. Economic determinism is not the whole story, nor yet is "free will" the whole story. The meaning and conditions of "freedom" have to be discovered; the modifying part played by economic and related factors has to be understood.

And perhaps this latter field is at the moment in need of the greater attention and greater clarification on the part of those who manage institutions and social agencies—not because it is necessarily more important absolutely, but because in relation to the day and hour it is the factor with which we have all shown ourselves least able to come effectively to grips. Or at least it is in relation to our comprehension of this part of the problem that we need to think through again the total problem of the supporting and environmental ways and means, no less than the dynamics, of the good life.

What, then, can organizations with mental and spiritual aims do in this direction?

I do not propose to elaborate details of method, but rather to suggest in outline the mandate which the nature of today's

difficulties seems to impose upon us. Details must in any event be adapted to particular local needs and conditions.

The need for *knowledge and comprehension of our times* seems to me the first requirement. Of the necessary action based on this understanding I shall speak presently. And this need for understanding seems to exist among boards, staffs, and members or clientele. Some specific suggestions as to ways of getting knowledge might, for example, be as follows.*

1. Encourage groups within the organization (boards, staff, clubs, etc.) to undertake systematic study and discussion of the meaning of current affairs, political, economic, and social. This may well include the creation of *ad hoc* committees and conferences to examine into special questions (e. g., child labor, minimum wage, neutrality, etc.). It may well include also the more active interest of such groups in following specifically the legislative activities of local boards of aldermen, state legislatures, and the national Congress.
2. Encourage special groups to undertake surveys of special problems in the local community (e. g., public utility rates, housing, cost of living). If the results of such surveys prove more valuable as education for the researchers than as a basis for publication, that does not necessarily lessen the value of these efforts.
3. Encourage such groups as those mentioned in (1) and (2) to make trips of inspection and study to see local conditions, institutions, and activities.
4. Help local groups to come together to discover and consider their common outlooks, interests and problems (e. g., consumers in general or of particular products or services, office workers, members of some industrial group).
5. Encourage the conduct of forums or panels to discuss timely problems under enlightened direction and guidance.
6. Help other local organizations (Chambers of Commerce, Rotary Clubs, Men's Clubs, etc.) to select topics and secure speakers who will be truly informative on various sides of current issues.
7. Help groups of unemployed to coöperate in retraining vocationally and in studying economic maladjustments.

* I am indebted to Mr. J. E. Sproul for suggestions here, growing out of committee deliberations of an Institute of Y. M. C. A. secretaries held at Silver Bay in the summer of 1935.

8. Encourage local people of recognized social vision and forward-looking outlook to join the organization's board of directors and otherwise participate specifically in its program.

9. Strive to make the administrative operation of the organization itself conform to the kind of democratic and coöperative basis and method such as is being advocated in this study. Certainly, to make the structural and leadership patterns of one's own organization develop in ways believed to be an implementing of sound principles, is one of the most obvious and at the same time one of the most powerful object lessons which the organization can supply to its community. It is then in the wholesome position where it can truthfully and confidently say that it only suggests that other organizations (including the community as a whole in its local governance) try to interpret and apply the same *modus operandi* that is already established as a sound basis of control and operation in the organization itself. "Go then and do likewise" is always one of the most effective appeals which can be made. Exhortation was, of course, never so powerful as example.

All of the foregoing are merely suggestions which the imaginative mind can enlarge upon in face-to-face contact with local conditions. If the obvious objection is offered that some or all of these suggestions may step on some one's toes, may frighten some of the community's "sacred cows," may involve taking a stand on an unpopular side, may frighten contributors, and the like, I can only say that any organization which knows what it stands for has to be prepared to stand for it at all costs—or close up shop. "Woe unto you when all men speak well of you," was first said to a group of twelve men charged with the tremendous responsibility of proselytizing for an unpopular and badly misunderstood cause, the strength of which has ever since only been truly advanced where the purity and austerity of its purpose have been kept inviolate.

There is, indeed, no escape from a dilemma here. Either the environing conditions of modern life help to advance "fellowship" or the "Kingdom of Heaven," or "personality growth," or whatever other phrasing one chooses in order to sloganize the

devoted pursuit of the good life for all—or they do not. And if they do not, the mandate is upon organizations to see why they do not, how they do not, and how conditions can be modified in the desired direction. The conditions of a more abundant life no less than the will to a more abundant life have to be studied, understood, and striven for. “This ought ye to have done and not left the other undone,” is a familiar way of reminding us of the bi-polar, interrelated fact about the mandate of our organizations.

There arises sooner or later, of course, the question as to what the organization may want to do in active effort to correct the conditions it finds and believes it knows the remedy for—at least in general terms. This problem of “direct action” is one to which different organizations are already supplying different answers. And it seems to me impossible to be dogmatic on this point. My own observations would frankly be somewhat cautionary, not for reasons of timidity but for reasons of clarity about the function of the particular organization.

From the standpoint of program formulation, I believe certain cautions have to be stated. For example, none of the suggestions made above seem to me to imply any idea that all organizations *as such* should necessarily “go into politics,” or in a certain sense “interfere in activities with which they have no concern”—if by interference is meant direct, responsible organizational attack upon specific institutions or their shortcomings. The responsibility of a college or of a church is, of course, in this respect different from that of an organization striving in its community to sponsor social conditions which foster better living on the material side. Political alignment is one thing; agitation about and advocacy of specific reform measures is another. Political activity as such is for political parties and for individuals and groups in their avowed political affiliations. But agitation for specific reforms related to the aim of the individual organization may well be an urgent mandate. A corrupt local government that is, for instance, obstructing some needed social

change or protecting some festering local vice, should challenge self-respecting citizens in many groups to act aggressively for correction.

Admittedly the line may in some cases seem to be drawn very fine. But the question of participation by the particular organization because of its concern over a given issue does not center about whether that issue is "political" or is "interference." It centers rather about *how that concern shall be manifested* once it is understood that the issue is one which creates adverse influences around the lives of members or of the community as a whole. And basically that concern would in the first instance seem to be one of *increasing understanding and of galvanizing the will to act once understanding is attained*. If after that point is reached the organization is convinced that it justifies itself only as it goes further into the arena of active support of public measures, then go it should, and having put its hand to the plow should not turn back.

This certainly is true: it is no longer (if it ever was) possible to hold in two dissociated compartments of living those acts which are "personal" and those which are "social." Personal action is social action. Social action is the action of persons. And there is no person apart from that person's action throughout the whole gamut of his activities. Nor is it possible in any conceivable way to divide personal action arbitrarily into "secular" and "religious." All actions are charged with religious significance when they represent a conscious devotion to some ideal end. Or they may not be so guided, in which case they represent a conscious or unconscious effort for satisfactions deemed purely personal and self-aggrandizing. Only the latter types of conduct are truly "secular." Apart from this there is no line to be drawn between those interests, problems, and concerns of individuals and of society which are or are not "religious" in implication. Every problem, every social, economic, or political issue which affects personality (and which does not?) has thus a "religious" bearing and burden.

Social change where conscious and deliberate is brought about by "movements," by political parties, by pressure groups—in a word, by the effective mobilizing of public opinion. But movements, parties, and groups are composed of individuals—who are somewhat amenable to knowledge and definitely amenable to emotional loyalty to what they *believe* to be right. And the task of transmitting knowledge and creating the will to act—or active faith in something as true and right—is on the whole the field for organizations with subjective ends. And it is at their peril—at peril to their sole reason for survival—that they limit discussion or that they fail to have a clear, glowing, and confident vision of what they believe to be the right and righteousness for our day and age.

This, therefore, is my answer to the inevitable objection that the program suggestions here offered are subversive, dangerous, provocative, or irrelevant. "Pure religion and undefiled" is not jeopardized by treating every justifiable program activity as "religious." Only thus is the program given meaning and relevance in terms of current needs and perplexities. Only thus does the program come to grips with reality and get itself concerned with one of the two chief things that can and should concern it: namely, the assuring of ways of living, of institutional settings, which permit the human spirit a place in the sun where it can flower and fulfill itself.

THE WILL TO ACT

I have said that the mandate of organizations with these subjective ends is to help forward *understanding* and to help *galvanize the individual will to act*.

The second of these aims centers about the dynamics of action. It is concerned with the arousing of the right kind of desire, the surcharging of the mind and heart with the right loyalties, the imparting or evoking of personal power to do good even when evil is present with one, and to have courage, faith, and devotion to carry on for high ends.

Here we are face to face with the deepest motives and mainsprings of action. Here if anywhere is where organizations rally their members out of confusion into unity of intention and integrity of vision and purpose; out of doubt and despair into faith and hope. Not that this central effort can be dissociated from organized concern for each individual's total social situation. But the emphasis in this connection is individual in focus.

I have no disposition to ignore this aspect of the problem. But it is, after all, not the major assignment of this study. I cannot pass on, however, without saying that where there is no real vision and passion and conviction, not only will there come no galvanizing of others but also there will come no truly profound understanding of the inwardness of the social or spiritual problems of our day. "This one thing *I know*," has to be the ringing premise permeating all program activity. There is a faith which is at the heart of devotion, of sacrifice, and of victory. And it is only as that faith has possession of the leaders that works of value can result.

If leaders are bewildered or if appeals to the new generation seem lacking in persuasiveness, the fault may well be less in those appealed to than in the failure of the organization to know that it has a pearl of great price which it should sell all else to possess and to share.

RELATIONS WITH THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

Organizations require the sinews of war. And that means that individual donors or community chests have to be demonstrably convinced that a useful purpose is being served by the requesting organization. This is no place for an extended discussion of publicity methods.* But a certain few aspects of the public relations problem properly deserve mention against the background of what has gone before.

It may first be rightly assumed, I believe, that the relations

* For this, see *How to Do Publicity*, by R. C. Mayer, New York, 1933.

with the board of directors should be such as to make it possible to utilize those relations in helpful ways direct and indirect with the larger public. "Names make news"; and whereas in the selection of boards this aspect should certainly not be the controlling one, it is important among others. The prestige value of the names of influential people on the board in getting money and moral support from others should not be ignored. With equal certainty it should be said that such influential people must be chosen in some relation to their personal outlooks and prejudices, and their known sympathy with the organization's real aims.

It is dangerous both to the institution and to its reputation in the community if the name and influence of some one prominent individual is allowed to become too dominant in its affairs. The very large donor, especially if on the board, can all too readily bring the organization under the public suspicion of being "kept," or at least of having an "angel." Increasingly, I believe, this type of support, which comes largely from one person or one corporation, is popularly suspected (whether justly or not is beside the point) as undemocratic, as illiberal, and as hazardous to the institution's autonomy and integrity of policy and growth. (It is the public-relations aspect of this situation which I am primarily dwelling upon at the moment.) The condition is widely held to be contrary to the spirit of the times. A wide base for support and for self-support is urged as the only defensible alternative.

Public recognition of the value of the services rendered by an organization is admittedly essential to its esteem in the local community. Such recognition is by no means easy for organizations where subjective gains are the major aim. Often the direct and most impressive gains are not, cannot, and should not be made "news." And this being true, it is both permissible and desirable for the general executive to be mindful that occasionally events which do *dramatize* the institution's work should be held. Sheer *repetition* of public mention of the organization's name, personnel, and particular activities has of itself, appar-

ently, considerable value as a prestige builder, and as a constant reminder throughout the community that something is happening in return for the donations or appropriations which have been made.

Surely it is prudent and canny for general executives (or some one) to know personally editors, reporters, news photographers, and feature article writers on the local papers. In fact, a similar friendly personal contact with other potential molders of local public opinion is desirable, including chamber of commerce secretaries, labor union executives, clergymen, and the like.

Without suggesting anything crass or blatant I do believe that the community should be allowed to know just as much, just as often, about what is happening, as possible. To give the impression of being "an up and coming organization" may seem to some executives a somewhat repellent task; but it is a logical and indispensable one under present conditions of the quality of community public opinion and of money-raising methods.

I am far from suggesting that organizations should be conducted "with an eye on the box office." But I am urging that the task of *interpreting* activities and results to the community through the board and through every other legitimate channel of public enlightenment available, is a necessary one. Nor is it a question of "giving the public what it wants." It is a question of explaining again and again in the community *why* it is that the organization takes the stand and pursues the line that it does. It is as important that motives be clarified as it is that methods be explained. It is a question also of showing the supporting public that *what the organization knows it wants and is working for in high and serene confidence will prove to be of value to the community*. The transmission of that conviction to local supporters is the essence of the public-relations program.

STAFF MEMBERS AS INDIVIDUALS IN THE COMMUNITY

Some will say that I have temporized in regard to the amount of "direct action" which the organizations here under discussion

can wisely take. And it should naturally be true that many staff workers and many members will be anxious *as individuals* to take a stand for, or to participate in movements for social betterment, to which their organizations are not directly committed.

It is for this reason that I venture to add a few hints about a program for the individual, since the query, "What can I do about this personally?" is so often asked. There is no pretense of completeness about the following suggestions; but they may serve as a stimulus to further individual exploration.

1. The individual should be sure that he exercises his franchise so as to vote for the political party he believes to be most in harmony with what he himself sees as desirable political objectives.

2. He should support specific legislation which he believes in by communicating his convictions to the proper legislators.

3. He should support by voluntary contributions or by avocational volunteer activity or both, the efforts of specific *ad hoc* organizations local and national, devoted to the forwarding of aims he believes in. (There are increasing numbers of these and thus an increasing chance "to be counted" and to be vocal vicariously in support of divers good causes.)

4. He should keep himself informed of current affairs by a careful selection of newspapers, periodicals, and books. Nothing less than a serious plan in this matter is his mandate as a conscientious citizen.

5. He should so far as possible in his rôle as consumer and as investor try to support enterprises and policies he believes to be sound.

6. He should, where his views on relevant issues are sought or expected in organizations to which he belongs, "testify to the faith that is in him," in giving persuasive support to the stand he takes.

7. He should try to get his own personal satisfaction and sense of duty done out of his persuasiveness and not out of a dramatic, absolute, and inappropriately timed stridency in affronting people who disagree with him, or out of efforts to shock them. He will use a teaching sense in his effort to bear witness to the truth—not be a bull in a china shop. There is a time for all

things, but the basis on which to decide *what* thing, is normally a question of what will be most effective in influencing others in the direction one believes they should take. This is in some part a matter of vocabulary, of using idioms that people are familiar with; and of starting with the preconceptions which people have. No one group in the community, for example, has a monopoly upon the Constitution, or "democracy," or "liberty."

8. He should try in the organization with which he is vocationally associated to use his influence to see that the organization itself—in whole or in the part where he has power and scope—begins to operate on principles which harmonize with his basic views of the proper relation of structure to attitude and of good will to good methods (see the entire study above for the further definition of this). Here, it would seem, is one of the most direct mandates imposed upon us, because here is an opportunity which comes definitely in the direct conduct of one's own familiar work situation. Without necessarily being a gadfly on the back of the organization, one can surely exert tactfully an influence for betterment in this field of building coöperativeness.

In general, it may be concluded on this point that, if it be agreed that we live in an age of rather acute social and economic transition, the individual's responsibility is to try, in so far as lies in his power, to see that the transition proceeds with a minimum of personal ill will, of acrimonious conflicts, of unwarranted allegations of personal wilfulness against members of other groups in society with whom one may disagree. The times do not call for bitterness, hatred, and despair; they call for insight, for the encouraging of fraternal attitudes, and for hopefulness and faith in betterment. The measure of one's stand for the good life lies in this: that one helps to conserve those values historically proved to be good and one strives eagerly to develop as good those newer values of coöperativeness, a sense of collective responsibility and institutional unity, which have become as never before the conditions of personal well-being in a highly organized and interrelated society.

One thing is certain. To decide to do nothing, to carry on as at present, because one does not know what to do (individually

or in respect to one's organization) is no answer. Thus not to act is the unforgivable sin of *omission*, which can be far more subtly dangerous and corroding to the spirit than the usual decalogue of sins of commission. The time has come when "to take a stand" is necessary. And if taking a stand is dangerous or is difficult, it matters not. It always has been in any cause worthy of the name. Better far to go down fighting for the truth as one sees it than to carry on a living death—either the person or the institution standing only as an empty shell to remind us that once some now out-dated purpose there stood enshrined!

CONCLUSION

If it be thought that this discussion has been a strange mixture of ideas—ideas about purposes, organization policies, working methods, personal obligations—all stirred up together and *not* sweetened to suit the reader's taste, that impression may be unavoidable. But the mixture and the juxtaposition of ideas are deliberate. Indeed, my whole theme has been that organizations embody and reflect the purposes and ideas of their leaders and members, that organization aims do not exist and do not get served apart from the tangible working methods and organized structure of human relations within that organization.

The time has come to see the objectives and functionings of people in associations as two inseparable halves of one fact: that of an organization pursuing its aims with methods consistent with those aims. If these two—objectives and functionings—hang together with an observable and logical inner unity and consistency, the organization can generate untold power and influence. If these two are at odds and are obviously inconsistent, there exists a central weakness which saps the vitality of the organism and eventually places it on the defensive.

In an hour when social, economic, political, and moral values seem shifting and uncertain, the imperative is greater than ever upon organizations with subjective ends to know what they stand

for and whether what they do and how they do it squares with their professed aims. And what these organizations profess to stand for does require that they give at once some earnest scrutiny and constructive reconsideration to how they are organized, controlled, and operated, in order to be sure that a true consistency of pattern and unity of working drive is present.

The implementing of fellowship requires a fresh examination of structure. The objectifying of good will requires a rethinking of good methods. The realizing of the good life can take place only as associated action expresses itself through good organizations.

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